

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 736

By Williams

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the Daytona International Speedway upon nearly fifty years of racing entertainment.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are especially proud to recognize those remarkable racing institutions whose events have provided entertainment to and earned endearing loyalty from legions of countless fans, many of whom hail from Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, throughout its nearly five decades in operation, the Daytona International Speedway has served as the site of many notable racing competitions and provided the backdrop for a flourishing sports industry that attracts many devoted and diverse fans who are inspired by the thrill of racing, as well as the courage, passion, and conviction of NASCAR's legendary drivers; and

WHEREAS, completed in 1959, the Daytona International Speedway was a bold project from the very beginning; at two and one-half miles, it was the longest closed-course circuit ever raced upon by NASCAR drivers; and

WHEREAS, the track's main event, the Daytona 500, has become the premier stock car race in the country, and most would agree that it is the preeminent American auto race; and

WHEREAS, on February 22, 1959, the inaugural running of the 200-lap race seemingly ended in a tie, with Johnny Beauchamp and Lee Petty crossing the stripe together; and

WHEREAS, since that February day, countless races have ensued, records set, controversies stirred, and a vast number of drivers have achieved monumental feats of glory; and

WHEREAS, in fact, the 1959 Daytona 500 had one of the most amazing finishes the sport has ever witnessed; after a three-wide finish between Lee Petty, Johnny Beauchamp, and

the lapped car of Joe Weatherly, NASCAR needed three days to analyze film and photographic evidence before Mr. Petty was named the winner; and

WHEREAS, just ten days before the 1963 Daytona 500, Tiny Lund helped pull Marvin Panch from his burning Maserati during a sports car test; Mr. Lund, who did not have a ride for the 500, drove Mr. Panch's car in the race and won; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, Richard Petty won his first Daytona 500 and two years later became the event's first two-time winner; he would go on to claim five victories by the twentieth running of the race and thus achieve racing legend status; and

WHEREAS, the battle between Mr. Petty and David Pearson in the 1976 Daytona 500 set the standard for excitement in stock car racing's biggest event; after their cars made contact and spun, Mr. Pearson's battered car claimed the checkered flag of victory; and

WHEREAS, the 1979 Daytona 500 marked a turning point in NASCAR'S growth as Richard Petty's sixth win was the first major NASCAR race shown live on television from start to finish; seen on CBS by sixteen million viewers, the telecast was the highest-rated program in its time slot, and it introduced an entirely new audience to NASCAR; and

WHEREAS, during that monumental race, viewers were treated to the now familiar images of Cale Yarborough and Donnie Allison slamming into each other and then veering into the Turn Three wall on the last lap; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Buddy Baker won the fastest Daytona 500 in history with a time of 177.602 miles per hour; the following year, Mr. Petty won his final 500; and

WHEREAS, the Daytona International Speedway's fourth decade saw Darrell Waltrip, after seventeen tries, and Dale Earnhardt, after twenty attempts, finally achieve victory in 1989 and 1998, respectively; and

WHEREAS, the NASCAR community was greatly saddened by the death of its beloved Dale Earnhardt on the final lap of the 2001 Daytona 500; his death on February 18, 2001 is deemed the darkest day in NASCAR history; and

WHEREAS, following in the fine footsteps of his legendary father, Dale Earnhardt, Jr., also achieved victory in the 500 – in 2004 on his fifth attempt; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Kevin Harvick edged Mark Martin for victory as they flashed across the finish line; the finish created a stir of controversy, but Harvick's victory stood; and

WHEREAS, for nearly 50 years, the Daytona International Speedway and its trademark Daytona 500 have contributed significantly to the long, distinguished history and incredible popularity of stock car racing; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and recognize the Daytona International Speedway, the site of the Daytona 500, for providing five decades of thrilling races, spectacular entertainment, and the legendary sport whose remarkable drivers have captured the loyalty of NASCAR's fans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.